

National Employment Team Members: Supporting Vocational Rehabilitation's Outreach to Businesses

**KTER Center's State of the Science Conference
on Employment Research**
September 6, 2019

KTER • CENTER
Knowledge Translation for Employment Research

Today's Speakers

- **Kathleen Murphy, Principal Investigator, KTER Center**
- **Amber Brown, AIR Summer Intern for KTER Center, PhD Student at Virginia Commonwealth University, former VR counselor**

Research Partner

**A big thank you to our partner in this project,
the Council on State Administrators
of Vocational Rehabilitation.**

Collaboration is Key to KT!:

Technical Working Groups (TWGs)

- **Goal: provide guidance on research activities**
- **Helps recruit focus group participants, develop instruments and protocols, participate in webcasts, & promote KTER Center's products to partners & stakeholders**
- **Members: disability-oriented leaders, NIDILRR grantees, consumers who reflect the population, and individuals from the VR and employment communities.**

Business TWG Members

- **Kathe Matrone, PI, Northwest ADA Center, Director of the Center for Continuing Education in Rehabilitation, and Workforce Innovation Technical Assistance Center (WINTAC) affiliate**
- **John O'Neill, Director of Employment Research, Kessler Foundation**
- **Kathy West-Evans, Director of Business Relations, Council on State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation**
- **John Connelly, CSAVR Director, Research and Grants**

Goals of the Knowledge Translation for Employment Research (KTER) Center

- **Increased understanding of processes and practices that will lead to successful KT in the field of employment for individuals with disabilities**
- **Increased adoption and use of relevant research findings funded by NIDILRR and other entities to improve employment of individuals with disabilities**
- **Increased capacity of NIDILRR's employment-focused grantees to plan and engage in KT activities**

Mandated Activities

- **Identify areas in which stakeholders' needs for research-based knowledge are most pressing**
- **Work with employment-focused NIDILRR grantees to identify research findings that can be used to improve employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities**
- **Investigate and promote effective strategies to increase the appropriate use of the best available knowledge in the field**

CSAVR Needs Assessment (2012)

- **CSAVR surveyed members regarding “*the top three issues your agency faces in the next four years for which you think additional research might help you better serve consumers and employers.*”**
- **Responses included general concern about business issues:**
 - **human resources**
 - **client services**
 - **return on investment.**

Other Formative Research: KTER Survey

- In 2012, KTER Center developed and administered a survey for VR counselors called *Making Research Work in VR Agencies* (Murphy et al., 2011).
- Six states, N=535.
- *“Please tell us about any area of your job where you think information about evidence-based practice would be helpful to you.”*
Collected 457 comments.

Identifying Key Role of Supervisors and their Potential to be Knowledge Brokers

- **Another key finding was that *a supervisor who emphasizes evidenced-based practice* influenced whether VR counselors sought out and used research on the job (Graham, Brooke, & Murphy, 2013).**
- **Consistent with finding from Rehabilitation Research and Training Center (RRTC) on evidenced-based practice (Tansey, Bezyak, Chan, Leahy, & Lui, 2014).**

KTER Center Take-away

- **Central role of management**
- **Research Tracks:**
 - **Transition-aged youth (separate presentation)**
 - **Adults with Autism (separate presentation)**
 - **Business Outreach**

Research Activity 1: Survey of National Employment Team Members

What are the most pressing informational needs related to their own needs and those of the business with which they work?

Sample Demographics (n=39)

Variable	Sample (N=39/80)
States in sample	37
Type of agency	General: 30 Blind: 9
Education	Less than college: 7.7% (3/39) Bachelors: 38.4% (15/39) Masters: 53.8% (21/39)
Holds CRC	23.1% (9/39)
Tenure in Position	26% (10/39):10 years BUT: Median time only 3.5 years

Training Interests Survey Question

Please indicate the degree to which you agree that, as a business consultant, you need additional information and training on the competencies (e.g., knowledge and skills) listed below to better perform your job.

Training Interests

Proposed Training Topics	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Agree	Agree
Outreach Communication Strategies to Businesses (M: 3.13)	0	5 12.8%	24 61.5%	10 25.6%
Relationship Building Strategies with Businesses (M: 3.10)	1 2.6%	6 15.4%	20 51.3%	12 30.8%

Training Interests

Proposed Training Topics	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Agree	Agree
Gathering and Using Labor Market Data (M: 2.95)	0	10 26.3%	20 52.6%	8 21.1%
Business Needs Assessment Methods (M: 3.21)	0	4 10.3%	23 59%	12 30.8%
Business Success Metrics (e.g., impact of VR on hiring) (M: 3.23)	0	3 7.7%	24 61.5%	12 30.8%

Comments from Follow-up Focus Groups: NET members (n=6)

We need a way to explain [to our staff] why businesses...operate the way they do.

Any tips that could be provided...[on] how we can fairly quickly research a company that we are interested in approaching so we can walk in with a sense of their needs.

It's been a difficult thing [knowing] what to track, how to track, and what does it mean.”

Comments from Follow-up Focus Groups: Business Representatives (n=5)

Knowing the business really well can help bring in quality candidates that produce; this may require understanding a business's mission and core values.

Helping a company understand all that's possible...some companies might be in one place thinking they need x, y, and z, but have not considered the other letters in the alphabet.

CSAVR and the local state business [consultants] need to understand the needs of the business and help them connect the dots.

Research Activity 2: Scoping Reviews

Which NIDILRR-funded and other research findings can be used to meet identified pressing needs related to improving the employment outcomes for KTER's target audiences?

What is a “Scoping Review”?

Scoping reviews or studies

- “aim to map *rapidly*
- the key concepts
- underpinning a research area and
- the main sources and
- types of evidence available”
- (Mays, Roberts, & Popay, 2001; cited in Arksey & O’Malley, 2005, bullets added).

What is a “Scoping Review”?

The purposes of a scoping review include

- examining the extent, range, and nature of research activity;
- determining the value of undertaking a full systematic review;
- summarizing and disseminating research findings; and
- identifying gaps in the research literature (Arksey & O’Malley, 2005).

Scoping Review: Goals and Inclusion Criteria

The research team developed the goals and inclusion criteria for this scoping review based on:

- **NET member survey results**
- **Findings from focus groups: survey respondents, representatives of businesses**
- **Discussions with the Technical Working Group (TWG)**

Scoping Review: Objectives



Scoping Review: Inclusion Criteria

- **Comprehensive database search for relevant literature published from 1988 through December 31, 2018**
 - **Yielded 459 results, plus 3 additional articles provided by stakeholders**
- **Two sequential reviewers completed title and abstract reviews using the same agreed upon inclusion criteria.**

Scoping Review: Inclusion Criteria

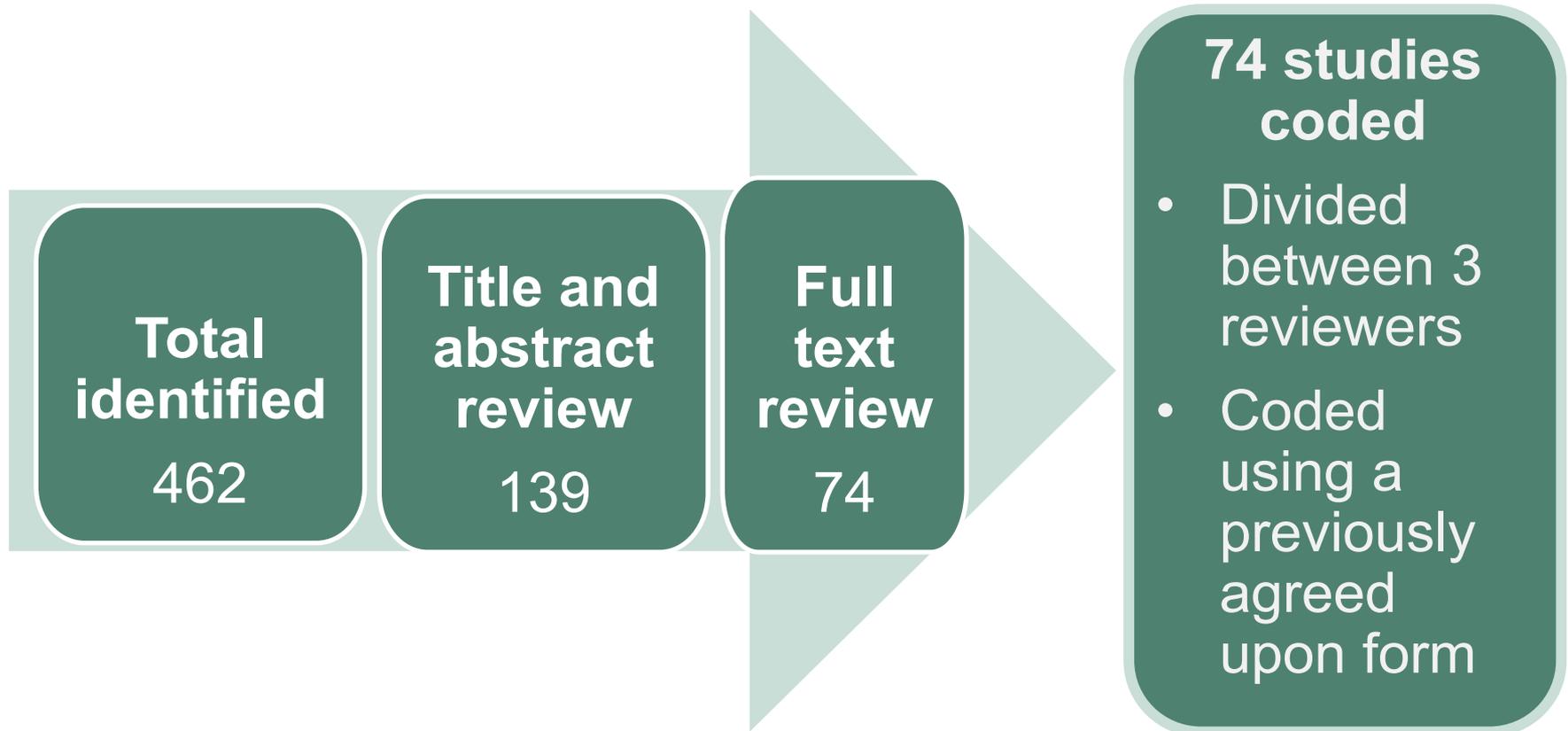
Key Criterion 1 (must satisfy all)

- ✓ Research or consensus based
- ✓ About helping people with disabilities obtain employment
- ✓ Can be used for training

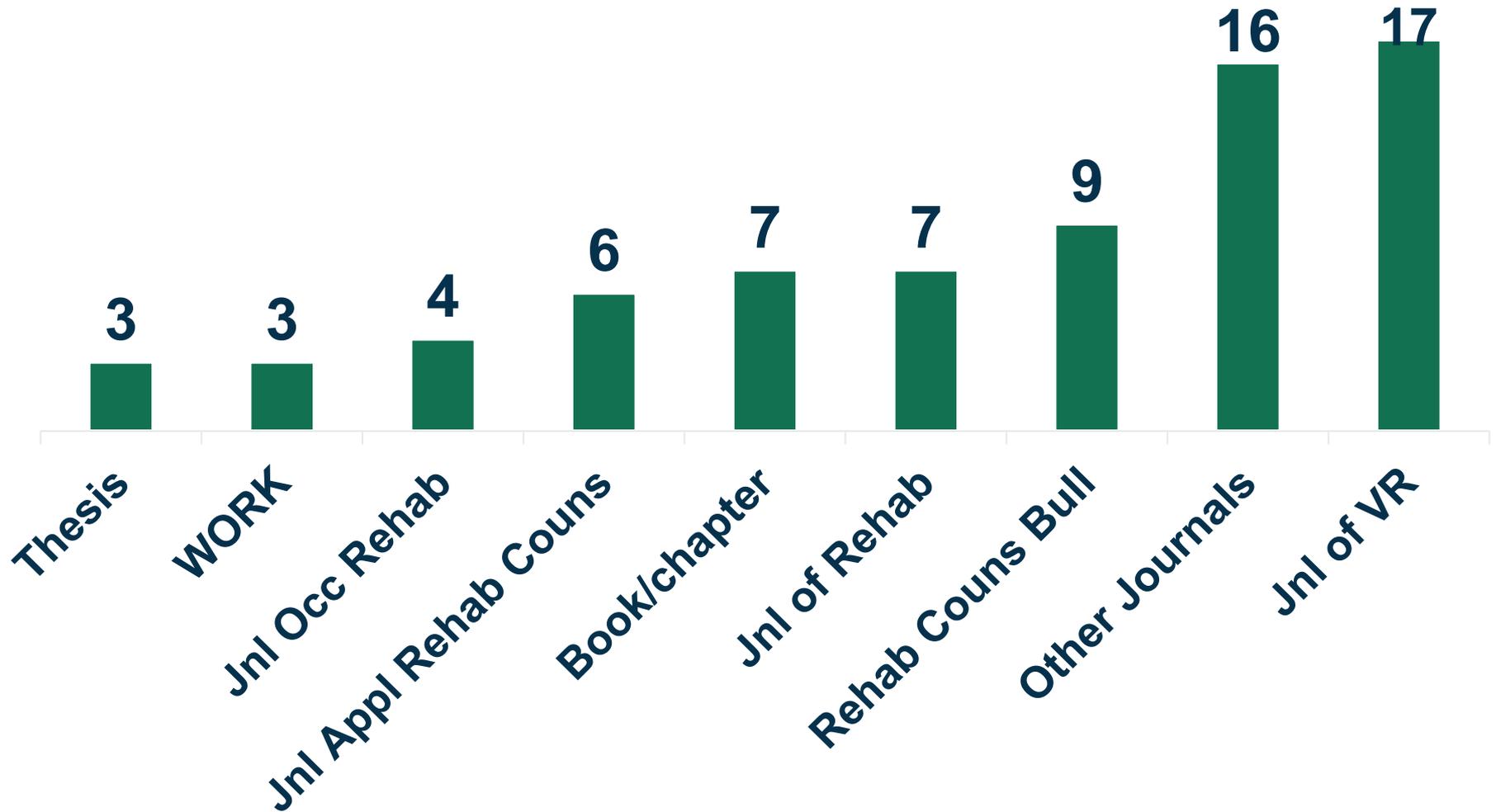
Key Criterion 2 (must satisfy at least one)

- ✓ About marketing to businesses
- ✓ About understanding and assessing business needs
- ✓ About supporting businesses who already have hired people with disabilities

Scoping Review: Assessment of Studies for Inclusion



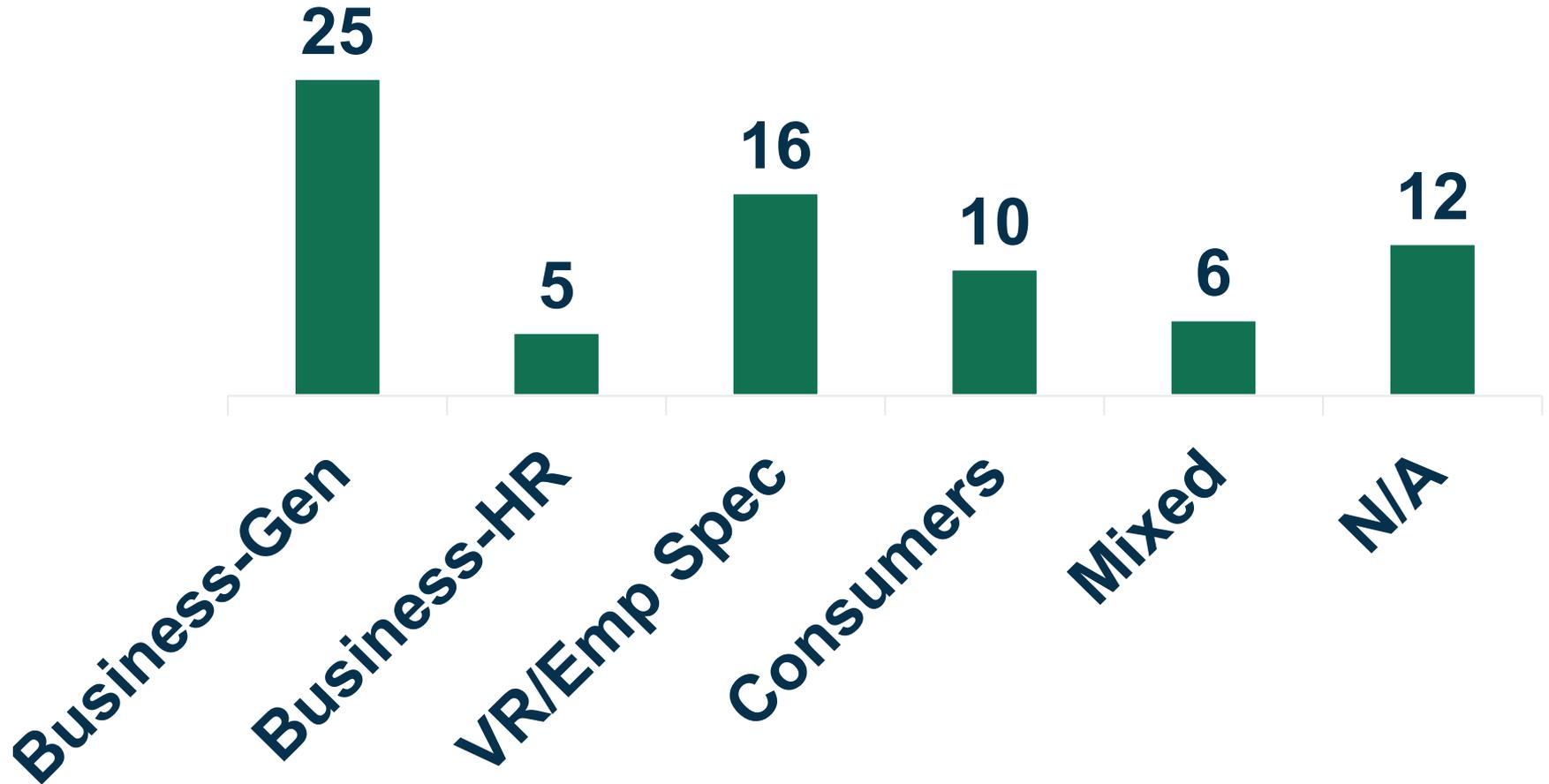
Scoping Review: Source of Articles (count)



Scoping Review: Types of Research Design (count)



Scoping Review: Sources Focused on Specific Populations (count)



Preliminary Themes

- **Understanding and Assessing Businesses Needs**
 - » **Identify employers' needs**
 - » **Assess employment opportunities**
 - » **Assess workplace climate**

- **Marketing to Businesses**
 - » **Create opportunities for conversation**
 - » **Explain the benefits of VR services**

Preliminary Themes

- **Explain the Benefits of VR services**
 - » **Maintain relationships**
 - » **Communicate needs**
 - » **ADA compliance/workplace accommodations**

Third Research Activity: Business Consultants as Research Liaisons

Will Research Liaisons (RLs), who receive training and support in the use of research-based practices, increase the uptake of businesses to improve consumer labor market outcomes (including employment and retention)?

NET Member Intervention Study Design

Randomization at state level of all those enrolled (14 to training, 14 to control, the rest on training wait list)

- **Training group:**
 - **1 self-paced online module on building relationships with business**
 - **Follow-up small group discussion**
 - **6 follow-up monthly check-ins from KTER staff via phone**

NET Member Intervention Measures

- **Enrollment survey for members of CSAVR's National Employment Team**
- **As outcome measure, baseline survey repeated after check-in phase**

- **Baseline/outcome surveys administered to representatives of businesses with which NET members work**

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The contents of this presentation were developed under grant number 90DP0077 from the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR). NIDILRR is a Center within the Administration for Community Living (ACL), Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The contents of this presentation do not necessarily represent the policy of NIDILRR, ACL, HHS, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.